

Testimony of
Kim McClain

Before the Judiciary Committee
Thursday, March 29, 2012
10:00 a.m.

**H.B. 5536 AN ACT CONCERNING REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION AS A
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MANAGER, LICENSURE AS A REAL ESTATE
BROKER OR SALESPERSON AND ORGANIZATION OF A UNIT OWNERS'
ASSOCIATION**

Kim McClain

I currently serve as the Executive of the Connecticut Chapter of the Community Associations Institute (CAI-CT). CAI-CT is the educational and technical assistance entity for community associations and their service providers in Connecticut. We are one of 58 chapters of a National organization. Through this alliance we are able to provide up-to-the-minute information on the issues and trends affecting associations, programs to enable community association managers to obtain professional credentials and access to hundreds of publications which provide tools to assist association members in their operations.

Background

CAI-CT works diligently to protect the rights and foster the responsibilities of all of our members. Through our programs, website and magazine, we foster *Best Practices* for associations throughout the State.

At our recent Annual Conference & Expo, over 500 dedicated association board members and unit owners attended. Based on our post-event evaluation survey, the attendees found this event to be very productive and engaging, providing many opportunities to broaden their knowledge about the operations of community associations.

CAI-CT supports the protection of homeowners and community associations through increasing professionalism, the training of community association managers and appropriate insurance coverage. CAI-CT also supports the national certification program – CMCA, sponsored by NBC-CAM.

We have included a copy of a white paper on the topic of manager licensing written by the Government Affairs staff with the National office of the Community Associations Institute. The document offers a thorough analysis of the various licensing requirements throughout the country and provides details about the types of courses required in order to receive credentials through the program provided by NBC-CAM.

We also support the training of Realtors in the area of the basic operations of condominiums and the rights and responsibilities of boards and unit owners. Although we believe that the Realtors have only the best intentions, it would appear that many purchasers of condominium units are often woefully unaware of the requirements of their community associations. We believe that Realtors can be an integral part of the education process for new owners of condominium units.

We wish to note that there are several excellent models for Realtor training in the area of condominium sales. We are especially impressed with a program in Calgary, Alberta which also offers a credentialing program for Realtors: Certified Condominium Specialist. Those who receive this certification wish to be recognized as specialists in the area of condo sales.

Most of the calls we receive from discontented owners are due to the lack of understanding of how their community operates and what it truly means to be governed by your neighbors. When we ask if the owners thoroughly read their association documents prior to or even after purchase, the response we typically receive is "no." Clearly, this lack of familiarity with the documents and an understanding of owners' rights and responsibilities can lead to misunderstanding and acrimony.

Unfortunately, the advertisements for many community associations paint a fantastic picture: 'throw away your snow shovel and lawn mower - live maintenance free!' While this type of advertising is quite enticing, it is also misleading. While condo owners may not be actually mowing the lawn, they must work with their neighbors to support a budget and fees that support paying for the lawn maintenance as well as a capital improvement program that sets aside monies for roof replacements as well as general repairs.

We believe that education should be an ongoing process for Realtors, Community Association Managers, board members and unit owners. Condominium ownership is a different lifestyle. The process of living in a community is dynamic. It is important that all the key players involved are mindful of how their community functions. Communication and education are the best methods for ensuring harmonious communities.

We would be happy to further discuss with you this issue, or any others affecting common interest communities in Connecticut. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns. I can be reached at 860-633-5692 or email: caictkmclain@sbcglobal.net.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim McClain